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**Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer**

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## PEPIN TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday May 27, 2026

**CALL TO ORDER:** Sue called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm

**ROLL CALL:** Sue F, Jenny B, Denise P, Mary P, Cheryl H, Shannon V, Gabby (zoom) Lisa S (survey)

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** A motion was made by Denise to approve the secretary's report as written, seconded by Mary. Vote called; motion carried unanimously.

### **FINANCE REPORT:**

- Approval of invoices: Invoice # 1214 was due to HW Marketing for \$1,350. A motion as made to pay this invoice for monthly May billable by Denise and seconded by Jenny, vote called; motion carried unanimously.
- Financial report review: Current balance is \$62,813.34.
- Room tax for the first quarter 2026 was \$17,287.58. This was an increase over last year for the same quarter. This was based on \$313,724 of gross room tax dollars.

**GRANT PROPOSALS:** A grant proposal for up to \$750 was received from Denise Parker on behalf of Village of Pepin Crazy Days for marketing and social media advertising. It will occur on June 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> and coincides with the Stockholm Art Fair drawing people from surrounding areas to experience what Pepin has to offer and encourage them to come back and stay in our lodging facilities. Sue motioned to approve and the motion was seconded by Mary. Denise abstained, a vote was called, and all present voted in favor; the motion was carried unanimously.

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A grant was received from our Tourism Entity West Coast of Wisconsin. Steve was present and has requested up to \$3500 to support continued web site development project and ongoing support. The project will include filtered search capabilities and scanning of web sites to auto-pull events. The marketing team meets every 4-6 weeks and updates photos, they also have a new social media team. Events are frequently posted from our area plus the bi-weekly newsletter suggests ideas for last minute trips. They are adding several more business but a member will include more information. Steve would like a list of all of the STR's and will provide basic information plus more detail for members. Sue made a motion to increase the grant to \$7,000, Jenny seconded the motion. A vote was called, and all present voted in favor; the motion was carried unanimously.

**SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION EFFORTS:** Jenny reported that the Red Wing Company who may have worked out is not feasible due to a cost of \$10,000. Mary mentioned the possibility of a freelancer. Gabby knows a few individuals with SEO experience (one whose main business is SEO) and agreed reach out to them via email them and bring feedback to the next meeting.

**HW MARKETNG UPDATE:** Gabby P indicated an Influencer came to our area Winery's and Cider's and took photos with people in the locations so they appear more interactive. A short discussion on the strong need for up-to-date events was held. Let Gabby know when things come up. Gabby found a way to connect to the WCOW web site. Gabby and Steve to connect.

Gabby mentioned WCOW employed an AI agent to scan websites and pull events from members. Perhaps we can license it or build our own AI agent, though not sure if it would scan Social Media. Defined borders to include Alma, Wabasha, and businesses up and down highway 35. Sue brought up that creating sample itinerary based on current events could be a weekly thing.

#### **MAPPING PROJECTS:**

#### **SIGNAGE:**

Sue received permits for the signs. Directional signs are on order. The poles were painted by Goran's son Milan. Some of the signs need more arms which will be welded by Wayne Prokosch.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Mary mentioned that 12,000 visitors visit the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum each year. Pepin being the birthplace of Laura Ingalls Wilder is a special and unique part of our village. Day

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visitors on average spend \$95 per day while overnight guests spend 3x that. She presented a concept of a Laura Ingalls Wilder park remodel that was impressive. She will put together a proposal and present it at the next meeting.

**TABLED TOPICS:**

**MEETING FREQUENCY:** Consider moving meeting to bi-monthly. Tabled until a new chair to replace Sue is in place.

**PLANTERS:** The commission has decided to postpone the Hwy 35 planters project until a solution for daily watering is identified. It was mentioned that there are self-watering planters that only need to be watered every 2-3 weeks. Mary inquired about beautification funding from the TIF program. TIF dollars covered a similar project in Mondovi, and the local garden club maintains them. Pat will include this topic in the agenda for the TIF committee meeting for discussion.

**NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday June 24th, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

**ADJOURN:** There was no further business to discuss and Sue made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Denice. Vote called, all ayes for unanimous approval. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Cheryl Herbison

